

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"WHATEVER DOOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

No. 318.—VOL. VII.

[Registered as a  
Newspaper.]

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1887.

[Registered as a  
Newspaper.]

PRICE TWOPENCE

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS ON SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA.\*

It is not unusual for American Journals with large circulation to devote some space in their Sunday edition to religious questions of general interest. They report sensational sermons in a style suited to the subject, and give fancy sketches in graphic language of popular preachers. To such a journal,—the *Inter-Ocean*,—the well-known authoress of *The Gates Ajar* contributed, at the opening of the present year, a very noteworthy paper entitled, "Can Spiritualism spiritualise?" At the outset Miss Phelps avows that she does not write as a Spiritualist; nor is she a Spiritualist in the proper sense of the term. Her style is redundant, and freely marked by the peculiar traits which her readers expect to find in it. She repeats an idea in so many forms that one wonders of how many permutations and combinations the words in which it may be expressed are susceptible. But her ideas, from the point of view which she occupies, are sound and true as far as they go; as far as her knowledge and experience carry her; only they do not go far and deep enough. Incidentally she presents a picture of the public Spiritualism of America which is black enough to terrify one. Without pretending to endorse all that Miss Phelps sets forth, or to fully criticise her opinions, or to supply that which is wanting in her argument to a full understanding of the subject on which she treats, it will be instructive for me to give a rapid summary of her article, and to quote some of her most impressive words.

The first thing that strikes her is that there is a forward movement from all sides. As she looks from without on Spiritualism she sees a desire to place its facts on a substantial basis of scientific demonstration on the one hand: eminent men desirous to investigate and report upon its claims. From within she sees a sincere desire and a considerable attempt to purify the methods which have too long obtained, and to substitute reasonable and honest methods of investigation. She writes:—

"It is a fact too significant to be passed by, that among the more intelligent sort of Spiritualists, there is distinctly arriving a movement for the purification and clarification of their own standards of faith and knowledge.

"How far this is caused by the encroachment which the entire class of immaterial phenomena has lately made upon scientific attention would be an interesting question to look into.

"Be the answer as it may, the circumstance is important, that, at this precise time, while psychical societies of distinguished men are busying themselves with the investigation of these facts

and phantasms, within the lines of extreme Spiritualism a bold revolution has arisen. When one of the most intelligent and reputable of Spiritualistic editors openly announces that 'there is not to-day in America a place where cabinet work is done that is entitled to the confidence of the Spiritualists, or the community at large, not one,' we may well give such an episode attention enough to ask if the money-changers are to be scourged out of the temple, and respect enough to cry to the scourgers a hasty godspeed."

It is time that this should be done. "The claims of Spiritualism are too serious not to be made subject to the laws of common-sense. . . . Whatever be their value, it must be stamped in the current coin of intellectual exchange, or take no dudgeon at the application of counterfeiters' tests." Miss Phelps is writing, of course, of the common phenomena of the dark séance room, which may readily be counterfeited by any practised trickster. The tests of the counterfeiter do not touch the core of the subject; they never can. But, all the same, no sane and honest man will take exception to the writer's dictum that what appeals to humanity for acceptance must submit itself to the laws of logic and common-sense that govern men in other matters. More than this. "Whatever be the prospects of this powerful and remarkable faith, it must meet the standard of mental morality, or the consequences of failing to do so."

"It is not easy for the kind of temperament which is most amenable to the influences of mystery to remember that the laws of evidence are as sacred as the hopes of faith.

"Because a man desires to believe an agreeable thing is not the less reason, but the more, why he should revere this species of sacredness. An immortal soul is a good thing to have, but it is not the more likely to be had by bad logic. Eternal blessedness is a comfortable fact, but it is not the surer for a defective argument. The personal presence of a dead friend with the bereaved is a glorious possibility, but wishing for it does not prove it. To talk with the beloved of your life across the grave were the victory of death, but trying to think you have done it does not make it so."

Precisely so. But Spiritualists, here at least, have now, for a long time, endeavoured to sift the evidence which seemed at first sight so conclusive in favour of the reality of their communion with their departed friends. And though all this evidence does not seem to some so cogent as it did in proof of this communion, there are many cases in which the evidence is unshaken in the opinion of those best able to judge, and is not seriously attacked by those who deem all such cases weak somewhere or other. Such are cases known to the private circle chiefly, where personal peculiarities of life-long friends and dearest relatives are reproduced, and the "living and dead" are united as they were before death stepped in and severed them. Some such cases are public property, and no destructive criticism makes any impression on them. In my *Spirit Identity* (Appendix 3, p. 105) is a case which is a well-marked specimen of this kind. If the Abraham Florentine who communicated with me in London, in the month of August of the year 1874, was not the Abraham Florentine who died at Brooklyn, United

\* From the *Daily Inter-Ocean*, Sunday Edition, January 9th, 1887.

States of America, in the same month, then who was he? I suppose there is no difficulty to any one more than superficially acquainted with such cases in believing that Florentine survived death and communicated with me. To any who regard this survival as an antecedent impossibility, or, as so strong an improbability as to be most unlikely, it remains to explain by what means these accurate facts were given to us respecting a man of whom none of us ever before heard. The theory of a personating spirit presents difficulties more ponderous than the Spiritualists' explanation: and it is no more acceptable to the class of critic to whom I have referred. If then, as I hold, such a case shows personal survival after physical death to be possible, I reason back from such a demonstration to other cases which are not so clear. The theory of the Spiritualist is the only one that covers all the ground. I do not say that it is necessarily applicable in every case. I am alive to the danger of attempting to make it of universal application. To argue from a few clearly proven instances to the universal, the whole mass, heterogeneous as it is, is a fallacy against which I do not need to be warned. I am content to have proved for myself the fact that some men survive physical death, and to wait for much wider and deeper knowledge to throw light on the many perplexing questions that beset the whole subject.

To return to Miss Phelps. If she does not quite realise how much there is below the surface of the vulgar American Spiritualism that she recoils from with a shudder, she does at any rate point a much-needed moral by a picture of its repulsive features. This is not without its instruction to us, though no such scene as she depicts is found here now, as it might have been ten years ago. There has been much said of the way in which in America professional mediumship is employed to mask less reputable trades. It is not so with us. It will not be so in America, when those who direct the movement, themselves alive to the dangers, make the people realise them. Miss Phelps, it will be seen, *admits the reality of the mediumship, which she believes to be helped by trickery and shrewdness.* It is an old story that she tells, and it is by no means a fairly coloured picture of representative public mediumship. But I sadly fear it represents adequately a class that one hopes is becoming extinct.

"Now (she writes) from the outside view—what is it that you who constitute the sect of Spiritualists offer to the world and the wisdom thereof as proof of the stupefying truths which you claim to command? You invite into some dingy or tawdry district of the nearest town, up flights of dubious stairs at the foot of which a guest sensitive to the conveniences of life may well pause and ponder on the reputability of his errand, to the séance rooms of your celebrated medium. The environment to begin with is barely respectable; every detail in the rooms indicates the absence of refinement or of education; the appearance of the medium does not help the matter. She receives us in a darkened room, and proceeds immediately to fall into what seem to be the premonitory symptoms of epilepsy, but what prove to be normal conditions of the voluntary trance. After a clammy and repellent prelude of some moments, in which our main emotion is a desire to get rid of the touch of her more or less *spirituelle* hand, she proceeds to fulfil her awful errand as the interpreter between the living and the dead. Breaking into a curiously unpleasant falsetto voice, she lets loose a cataract of 'communication' upon her customer. . . . . She plies us with shrewd personal questions; he needs be well on his guard who would not make her the gift of his history and not know that he had been so generous. She catches at every thistledown. She is alert to every breath. Not a tone escapes her. If the room were not dark one would say not a blush escapes her, nor the quiver of an eyelash, nor the uncontrollable or unconscious expression that looks out like a spirit in prison from the bars of the inner eye. She is in short a skilled lawyer, or she is no medium.

"Be it acknowledged that she is more than this. Strange questions leap from her wily lips; they are beyond wiliness;

startling disclosures follow in her shrewd voice; they are above shrewdness. Words that make the blood rush to the heart embody themselves in her politic accent; they are without the pale of policy. The names of our dead, the circumstances of bereavement, the peculiarities of family history. The nature of one's cruel anxiety or remorse—perhaps the secret of one's heart—this stranger whom we never saw before, and may never see again, who knows not our face, or names, or social ties, or anything whatsoever that is ours—such things she tells us, Heaven knows how. Thousands of intelligent 'investigators' can testify to these facts; they are beyond dispute, whatever they mean, if they mean enough to be worth dispute."

The strange mingling of truth with error, the real with the fantastic, that often—not always, Miss Phelps!—characterises the communications made at a mixed circle, is well brought out, though rhetorically and with exaggeration. And the writer does not know enough of her subject to be aware that this medley is the result of the conditions under which the messages are given; the inseparable accident of that which our folly permits and encourages.

"Mystery and folly are like the inhalation and exhalation of the medium's breath. She tells you that your grandmother perished of Asiatic cholera; it was your great uncle who died of dyspepsia. She assures you that a spirit known as Sweet Marie is standing with her arms about your neck; you lost a cook last week by the name of Mary Ann. She prophesies that you will be married in May; your wife is in excellent health and your seven children, but your brother is betrothed. She promises you that your husband will grow rich this winter; you are an old maid enamoured of the Associated Charities, but you have been speculating in Bell Telephone. She foretells that you will die on the 31st of the next month; you recover from a deadly illness which attacks you on the 13th.

"If she persuade you to her 'circle,' what have you? Still mystery and folly clinging hand to hand. You sit, with the gas down, among a motley group such as you would personally encounter nowhere else, unless on an excursion steamboat. In the presence of strange men and women, such, perhaps, as you would not select to inquire your way of in the streets, the most sacred events of your life are handled like the riddles of a guessing game. The wife of your youth, the child of your heart, the name of your mother, become the subject of a miscellaneous chatter called 'communications.' Flowers fall at your feet; cymbals tinkle in your ears; whispers startle the air; finger tips stroke your cheek. You may or you may not surprise the hand of the flabby gentleman, your neighbour, or the stout lady, your *vis-à-vis*, in the act of offering to you the sacred embraces of your dead. You may or you may not have any honourable reason to suspect the impartial investigator or materialising medium of the blasphemy which uttered solemn words that you hold the breath of your soul to hear. You may come away from that circle believing that you are an escaped dupe or that you are an elected neophyte; that the thing was a fraud or a revelation; that you have been blessed by Heaven or cheated by hell—this will be as it may be; your own temperament quite as much as the honour of the medium will decide that—but in either case or any case, what have you?"

On this theme the writer expatiates with much superfluous verbiage. The gist of all she writes is that a dear friend would not return to earth to use such methods to prove her love, and its and her survival; that a meddling with such mean things debases all concerned; that if Spiritualism does not make men better it is likely to make them worse. All this has been said, and better said before. It is true enough, as half-truths are, but it is not the whole truth, nor even a considerable part. Miss Phelps thinks that in the present attention to psychical research Spiritualists have their chance, "the best you ever had, the best you are likely to get." As to that it is permissible to differ in opinion. The claims of Spiritualism are not very likely to receive any very fair treatment in America by the present Society which sets itself to deal with them, any more than they did when the Harvard Professors professed to investigate them. But, be that as it may, we may not deny the obligation laid upon us to see that Spiritualism is

of good report, that it is not degraded to base uses, that it is not besmirched by disreputable practices, that its evidence is presented in the best form, that its teachings ennoble the lives of its devotees. Who can resist an appeal such as this, made by one so earnest, echoed by many who fain would believe if only they could ?

" It seems to me that honest and intelligent Spiritualists do not clearly understand how glad the rest of the world would be to believe in their doctrine, if it could—or will be when it can. What, indeed, is it that you offer us ?

" Simply the most stupendous thing in life. The grandest hope, the deepest comfort, the dearest expectation, the firmest support—these are the materials and the collaterals of your gift to mankind, if in truth you have a gift to give. Who of us would not forego every lighter faith to believe that death has invented a vocabulary for the broken heart ? Which of us would not lay down life itself to know that we had spoken yesterday with the darling of our souls, dead, years ago ? Are men so cheaply made, is love so cold, or loyalty so slight, or faith so dim, that the mass of mankind will not believe these things, if it has reason to ? Are scholars and scientists themselves so dehumanised that they should refuse to receive the most precious treasure possible to knowledge, if they could get the proof of it ? "

By the side of this I will place as a final word an extract from a paper emanating from another source. After a discussion of the reality of certain phenomena, especially automatic writing, in the course of which the admission is made that " automatic writing and cognate automatic phenomena occur admittedly ; or, if this be as yet too much to affirm, yet we at least admit them, we hold that they present problems of high interest to the psychologist," the following passage to which I desire to direct attention occurs :—

" But to Spiritualists the point is a vital one. No mere physical phenomena—whatever else they might prove—could carry a persuasion of the continued existence of departed friends greater than that which might be afforded by automatic messages which should contain an internal evidence of authenticity, resting not on subjective considerations only, but on demonstrable coincidences of fact. We can assure Spiritualists that the conclusion which they would have us draw from such phenomena is one which we have no reluctance whatever to accept, if we could find it supported by adequate evidence. Indeed, if we regarded the prospect of arriving at this conclusion as altogether excluded, our interest in the subject would be decidedly less than it is.

" We admit, then, that the evidence already accumulated for Spiritualistic phenomena is more sincere, more varied, more extensive than the ordinary world is ready to suppose. But we maintain that most of it is largely infused with a subjective element,—is such as may perhaps be adapted to found a sect, but certainly not to establish a science. This indeed has been the result—inevitable perhaps at the outset—of the strong emotional interest which these inquiries involve. Doctrines which touch on interests at once so vast and so personal have never yet in the world's history been treated in a purely scientific spirit. From the dawn of speculation onwards they have moulded themselves not into science, but into religion ; and it is not into a science, but into a religion, that the majority of Spiritualists mould them now. We have no wish to attack, or even to defend ourselves against, believers of this type. But we must repeat that the very *raison d'être* of our Society is to take a course exactly opposite."

The passage quoted occurs in the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research, and is signed on behalf of the Literary Committee by the honorary secretaries of that body. I have underlined a passage which bears on what I have been commenting upon.

COUNT LEININGEN, who is one of the distinguished members of the Psychological Society of Munich, has written an interesting paper on " Spiritualism in the Middle Ages."

In answer to many applications we beg to announce that " M. A. (Oxon)'s" *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism* may now be procured from 16, Craven-street, or from Mr. George Redway, York-street, Covent Garden. We regret to say that *Spirit Identity* is out of print ; and that *Spirit Teachings* is not

## REVIEW.

### *The Hayward Correspondence.*\*

Mr. Abraham Hayward, Q.C., was an accomplished and agreeable writer, with much knowledge on some subjects, and general good sense, except in being ashamed of his ancient and honourable prenomen, of which there was certainly nothing to be ashamed ; and in writing on the subject of Spiritualism, of which, like many other clever men, he seems to have seen much without having learned anything. He was for many years a prominent member of London society, and in perusing these volumes the reader will experience some measure of that noble elevation of feeling enjoyed by Mr. Arthur Pendennis when he walked down Pall Mall with his uncle, the Major, " who touched his hat to everybody, and everybody he met was a lord." Mr. Hayward's name is less known to the general reader than, on the whole, it deserves to be, as he wrote, for the most part, anonymously, in the *Quarterly* and other leading periodicals and journals of his day. His subjects were generally derived from high politics or social history, and more than usual interest and importance attached to his articles from the facilities which he was known to enjoy for obtaining exclusive information on such topics. When, however, Mr. Hayward ventured upon subjects, for discussing which the family repositories of the aristocracy and the confidences of statesmen could afford him no exclusive advantages, he was less successful. One of such subjects was Spiritualism, upon which we are reminded by this correspondence he wrote an article entitled " Spiritualism as Related to Religion and Science," in *Fraser's Magazine* for January, 1865. In the fulfilment of our duty to our readers we have explored that extinct volcano, and have unearthed this harmless projectile. In the fulfilment of his duty to his readers, Mr. Hayward tells us he had had occasion to consult Mrs. Crowe's *Night Side of Nature*, Mr. Coleman's *Spiritualism in America*, Mr. William Wilkinson's *Spirit Drawings*, Mr. Dale Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundaries of Another World*, the *Spiritual Magazine*, 'From Matter to Spirit, by C. D., with a preface by A. B.', and Mr. William Howitt's *History of the Supernatural*. He had also apparently assisted at séances of Mr. Home and other mediums. Thus equipped, Mr. Hayward travelled, in Spiritualism, " from Dan even unto Beersheba, and found—nothing." Of Mr. Home and his *confrères* he speaks with unqualified contempt. " This worthy," he says, speaking of Home, " beats Joe Smith hollow, for he persuades people that they hear what they do not hear ; that they see what they do not see ; that an accordion which makes an irregular noise is playing a popular tune ; and that he is floating near the ceiling when he is simply standing on a chair with one foot touching a disciple's shoulder." A very persuasive and wonderful person, truly ! " Mrs. Hayden failed completely with the writer" in consequence, he tells us, of the precaution which he took " not to pause or hesitate at the required letters during the operation." His introducer on this occasion he does not fail to tell us was " a peer."

He, however, seems to have made some discoveries. " The greater wonders," he finds, " were never attempted, or, at all events, never succeeded with an unbeliever in the room." Also, " If you go to a medium, take a paper of which the contents are unknown to yourself ; you will find that the medium can make nothing of it, because few persons have self-command enough to avoid aiding the discovery by look or word while the performer is making guesses or putting tentative questions."

Having, after this fashion, disposed of the mediums, Mr. Hayward proceeds to deal with the literary aspects of Spiritualism, and is especially severe, in a guarded

\* Letters and Correspondence of Abraham Hayward, Q.C., from 1884 to 1884. Edited by Henry E. Carlisle. London : J. Murray

way, on William Howitt and the writer of the preface to *From Matter to Spirit*. While, however, deprecating the "inordinate credulity" of the former, he pays tribute to his learning, as displayed in his *History of the Supernatural*, a compliment which Mr. Howitt would perhaps have found it more easy to accept than to reciprocate, as he would have found on reading the article that he had accommodated his critic with valuable references to Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Origen, Cyprian, and Lactantius, enabling him to impart an agreeable flavour of research to the religious portion of his composition without imposing upon him any severe weight of study on his own account.

But the credit of having made Mr. Hayward's hair fairly stand on end must be ascribed to Professor De Morgan. "The Spiritualists, says A.B., *alias* the Professor of Mathematics, beyond doubt are on the track that has led to all advancement; their opponents are the representatives of those who have striven against progress. They have the spirit and the method of the grand time when those paths were cut through the uncleared forest in which it is now the daily routine to walk." In other words, the Spiritualists have examined facts without reference to their antecedent improbability, and have reasoned on those facts, rightly or wrongly, to the best of their ability; the anti-Spiritualists have not examined facts, prejudging their falsity from their improbability, and have not condescended to reason upon them at all except on the basis of antecedent knowledge. What is Mr. Hayward's answer to this—the *argumentum ad hominem*, with a vengeance? "Wheatstone, Faraday, Brewster, and Dickens," he says, "the representatives of those who have striven against progress! Mrs. Hayden, Mr. Forster, Mr. Colchester, and Home on the right track of invention and discovery!" What would have been the lot of Mr. Hayward if this criticism had fallen under the notice of the "Professor of Mathematics" when he was writing his *Budget of Paradoxes*, can only now be conjectured. The condition of a bat on a barn door may afford some inadequate conception of it.

Such was the description of logic which a Queen's Counsel and responsible man of letters thought good enough for Spiritualism in that day; and these are the description of arguments which were to establish that it had no foundation save in incredulity and imposture. They, and such as they, were, however, apparently, from the correspondence before us, thought quite good enough for the subject by clever people, then.

Mr. Hayward indulged in a practice, greatly to be deprecated we think, as adding a new terror to an acquaintance with literary folk, of sending his articles to his friends to read. Mrs. Grote, a lady who, from the virility of her mind, her manners, and her mode of attiring herself, was described by Sidney Smith as "an extremely gentlemanly woman," in a letter acknowledging one of these compliments—to wit, this article on Spiritualism—writes, "The subject is tossed about and sifted very thoroughly; and the various points of view, whether as regards evidence or utility, historical basis, arguments derived from universal belief of mankind and from individual authority, are each disposed of and—rejected." "This article, I think, must strike at the root of the superstition and do service." We must confess to not having been able to find in the article all the wonderful things Mrs. Grote discovered in it, and the harrowing suspicion arises that this very clever woman had written her letter before she had read the article,—if she ever read it,—and had endowed it with such a comprehensive glance at the "various points of view" as might be gathered to be contained in it, from its title. Another lady, whose letter on the subject is given in the correspondence, though not an *esprit fort* like Mrs. Grote,

is less effusive. Lady Clanricarde, daughter of Canning, writes:—"I am not nearly so sceptical as yourself with regard to visible and tangible facts. *Half the things we see in the course of nature would seem impossible to us if they were new.*" The daughter of the statesman shows more insight than the wife of the historian, possibly because she inherited from her illustrious father a measure of that imagination, the lack of which is, in fact, mental short-sightedness, and often prevents very clever ladies, (and gentlemen,) from seeing beyond their noses.

A. A. W.

#### THE LITERATURE OF SPIRITUALISM, OCCULTISM, &c.

It will be seen by an announcement made in another column that arrangements have been made with Mr. George Redway\* for the prompt supply of books on occult subjects which any of our readers may desire to purchase. This journal covers a wide area, and circulates among all sorts and conditions of occult folk. Many of these, no doubt, know that Mr. Redway has devoted a deal of attention to occult subjects, and has made that branch a speciality of his business. Not only does he himself publish a great number of such works, but he accumulates a large collection of second-hand books on these subjects, which are not easily procurable.

From his last published catalogue of fifty pages, and containing the titles of some 1,000 volumes on all varieties of occult subjects, our readers may gather some idea of the range covered by Mr. Redway's list.

The subjects include Astrology, Alchemy, Animal Magnetism, Behmen and Mysticism, Buddhism, Clairvoyance, Dreams and Visions, Divination, the Divining-rod, Fascination, Freemasonry, Folk Lore, Gnosticism, Ghosts, Hieroglyphics and Secret Writing, Hermeticism, the Kabbala, Miracles, Magic and Magicians, Mysteries, Mesmerism, Metaphysics, Oracles, Occultism, Physiognomy, Psychometry, Rosicrucianism, Spiritualism, Symbolism, Serpent-worship, Somnambulism, Theosophy, and Witchcraft—to omit all notice of cognate subjects not so well known.

The list includes many rare works, which those who would purchase must expect to pay for rather highly; but we have no hesitation in saying that the books known to us are valued reasonably, and we believe that to be the case with all.

**THE LATE KING OF BAVARIA.**—At the time when the late King of Bavaria committed suicide, it was commonly reported that he had been driven to do so by his experiences in Spiritualism. Not crediting the statement which then reached us, we asked a resident in the capital to ascertain the exact facts for us, and we are reliably informed that it is quite true that the late king daily communicated with a spirit whom he believed to be "Marie Antoinette," but that this had to do with his death is totally incorrect, as it was a well-known fact that his mind was diseased long before he had become a Spiritualist. We remember it being said, seven years ago, when Mr. Eglinton last visited Munich, that he had been invited by the king to give séances, but that Mr. Eglinton had refused to do so in consequence of the possible effect of such sittings upon the king's mind.

**A PRINCELY MEDIUM.**—We have occasionally referred to the fact that a certain well-known Austrian prince is an excellent physical medium. A well-informed correspondent sends us an account, which we are from obvious reasons unable to publish, of some of the Prince's experiences in mediumship, and he particularly refers to a conversation which he had had with the Prince regarding the materialisations which the latter obtains. The Prince mentioned that on one occasion when he was giving a séance for form manifestations, he distinctly felt himself covered with drapery, and that he had a strong inclination to rise from his chair. He remarked that had he done so, and had a sceptic caught him in the act, he would have been considered to have personated the spirit, as Bastian was said to have done in Vienna. Such experiences are interesting because they tend to prove how little we know of the laws governing any of these phenomena, and how careful we should be before we *stampede* a medium as practising deception upon persons who may witness what they conceive to be a suspicious circumstance.

\* George Redway, Publisher, York-street, Covent Garden.

## SPIRITUALISM IN FRANCE.

Signs are not wanting that Spiritualism in France is beginning to develop out of the crystallisation of Kardecism. A disruption has at last taken place, and certain "schismatics," calling themselves "immortalistes," have revolted. It is too soon yet to say what the result of this new departure may be, but change, and that probably for the better, must be the outcome. The following protest appears in *Le Spiritisme* for January 15th :

"A regrettable schism occurred last September in the committee of the 'Société Parisienne des Etudes Spirites.'

"Certain members of the committee, bringing with them new tendencies, attended in order to repudiate a large part of Spiritualistic doctrine. These, attacking even the glorious name under which we have fought for thirty years, called themselves 'immortalistes,' and asserted that Spiritualism had had its day both as to its name and as to its doctrine.

"We, the undersigned, wishing above all to remain Spiritualists, and to follow the course which the 'Société Parisienne' has traced out for itself for so long, and which is nothing else than the search for truth by scientific experiment, have protested and do protest with all the energy we possess against this new departure.

"The committee, thus divided, called upon the Society to proceed to new elections, and, by a manœuvre carried out at the last moment, the schismatics or 'immortalistes,' having introduced into the meeting certain recruits more or less Spiritualistic, who had never previously appeared in the Society, made themselves masters of the situation.

"For us, then, there was no course left but to retire and to protest with all the force at our disposal against such methods, as deplorable for Spiritualism as dangerous for the future of the 'Société Parisienne.'

The protest is signed by the president, vice-president, and eight other members of the committee.

The following extracts, from an article in the *Vie Posthume*, for January, will to some extent explain the position of the other side :—

"Up to a certain point we understand the feeling of those who through respect—it may indeed be tinctured with fanaticism—continue to shut themselves up within the limits prescribed by the *Livre des Esprits*. But these people have assuredly no right to anathematise those who cannot consent to fix themselves for ever within those limits."

"We are accused of not being Spiritualists because we mutilate the work of Allan Kardec. We do mutilate that work, but as a skilful gardener mutilates year by year the trees confided to his care, cutting off the dead boughs or parasitic growths, and thus facilitating the shooting forth of fruitful branches."

"The world of spirits and this present world constituting but one and the same world, the attitude of the suppliant and the obsequious formulas of prayer are as much out of place and exaggerated in our communications with the supra-terrestrial world as in the communications between man and man. This tendency towards servility may possibly be explained when it occurs amongst primitive peoples, where the state of rudimentary civilisation still includes such relations as that of masters and slaves, kings and subjects, but there is no reason for its existence in a country which is in the vanguard of civilisation like our own."

The "schism" seems fairly complete. The arguments on the side of the "immortalistes," however, do not seem always quite happy. It is amusing, for example, to find the habit of prayer derided because France is a republic. But this movement among the dry bones of French Spiritualism is of welcome and happy augury.

It is gratifying to find that just as French Spiritualism is emerging from the stagnation in which it has been plunged for so long, and when it needs instruction as to the thoughts and methods of those over whom the glamour of Allan Kardec has not been thrown, that instruction is being provided in *L'Aurore*, edited by Lady Caithness (Duchess de Pomar).

The first two numbers which are before us exhibit a catholicity of sentiment sadly lacking in French Spiritualistic literature, and which, if it leaven it in ever so slight a degree, will confer immense benefit on the readers of that literature.

This catholicity is asserted at once in the short address "to our readers" which appears in both numbers.

"Each writer is here responsible for his own writings and

for the doctrines he sets forth. This Review is eclectic and completely independent of any leaning or foregone conclusion.

"It is a journal of conscientious studies, undertaken with the sole desire of elevating the human mind, and of bringing it to the study of spiritual things, in this materialistic and anti-religious age."

And, if we may judge from the numbers we have seen, this lofty idea is likely to be carried out.

The Spiritualistic literature of the English-speaking countries is little known in France, and to the spread of this knowledge Lady Caithness has addressed herself. Hence, one is not surprised at finding the name of Dr. Anna Kingsford among the contributors, and that Mr. C. C. Massey's remarkable article on "Faith," which appeared in "LIGHT" of October 16th, has been translated by a sympathising hand.

The awakening that has come about in France renders the appearance of *L'Aurore* in every way most opportune, and we wish it heartily God-speed.

II

## THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH.

The following extracts from the *Occult Philosophy of Henry Cornelius Agrippa* (Book III., chap. xli.), concerning man after death, may prove of interest to the readers of "LIGHT," especially to such as are Theosophists, and can read between the lines :—

"In generall it is appointed for all men once to dye ; death is fatal to all ; but one is naturall, another violent, another voluntarily received, another inflicted by humane lawes for offences, or by God for sin, that they seem not to have rendered a due to nature, but a punishment for sins ; which (as the Hebrew masters saith) God remitteth to none. . . . .

"Moreover the Ettinick Philosophers pronounced that retaliation of this kinde (viz., that he who useth the sword shall perish by the sword, &c.) is Adrastia, viz., an inevitable power of divine laws, by the which, in courses to come, is recompensed to every one according to the reason and merits of his former life. . . . .

"The spirit of a man, which is of a sacred nature, and divine offspring, because it is alwais faultless, becomes uncapable of any punishment ; But the soul, if it hath done well, rejoyceth together with the spirit, and going forth with its *Aerial Chariot*, passeth freely to the quires of the Heroes, or reacheth heaven, where it enjoys all its *senses and powers*, . . . . and being made partaker of the divine power bestows freely divers gifts upon these inferiors, as if it were an immortal God. But if it have done ill, . . . . this soul being voyde of an intelligible offence, and being left to the power of a furious phantasy, is ever subjected to the torment of corporeall qualitie. . . . .

"This image of the soul, therefore, enters into the Ghost as an *Aerial body*, with which being covered does sometimes advise friends, sometimes stir up enemies . . . . For when the soul is separated from the body, the perturbations of the memory and sense remain.

"For as the manners and habits of men are in this life, such affections the most part follow the soul after death, which then calls to mind those things which it did formerly do in its life, and then more intently thinks on them, forasmuch as then the divers offices of life cease."

These scanty gleanings, from a most bounteous harvest of information on occult mysteries, are gathered from the quaintly-spelled translation of 1651.

G. R. S. M.

Miss HELOISE HERSEE read an interesting paper at the Browning Society, on the 28th ult., on "Browning's View of Immortality."

*Walford's Antiquarian* (G. Redway) contains an article on the Rosicrucians, by Mr. E. N. Waite. He does not disguise his opinion that all hitherto published works on the subject are valueless, not even excepting the pretentious book of Mr. Hargrave Jennings, which he describes as "a mass of ill-digested erudition concerning Phallicism and fire-worship, the round towers of Ireland, and serpent symbolism, offered with a charlatanic assumption of secret knowledge as an exposition of Rosicrucian philosophy." There is much to be done in working this secret mine of knowledge, but the results will probably be interesting rather to the Antiquarian than to the Occultist.

Our discoveries in the domain of the occult sciences are very imperfect, because they are made merely at the portal of our senses, but little as we know of them, they are of the more value because those studies have reference to Divine things.—ARISTOTLE.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"  
16, CRAVEN STREET,  
CHARING CROSS, W.C.

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Five lines and under, 3s. One inch, 4s. 6d. Column, £2 2s. Page, £4. A reduction made for a series of insertions.

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## Light :

Edited by "M.A. (OXON.)" and E. DAWSON ROGERS.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5th, 1887.

### THE INVESTIGATION OF RARE PHENOMENA.

No. II.

Among the rare phenomena which have been brought forward within comparatively modern times, and to which investigation has been directed, there are those of Mesmerism, Clairvoyance, Spiritualism (divided into many branches), and Theosophy.

Each of these will be dealt with; but as considerable attention and controversy has lately taken place relative to what is termed "slate-writing," which may be considered one branch of Spiritualism, we will deal in this article entirely with this one subject.

The rare phenomenon now under investigation, is one which occurs, not with every person, but with only a very few, say, one in ten million. There are at the present time, perhaps, half-a-dozen persons in Europe and America with whom it is stated this slate-writing takes place.

Two slates locked or bound together are purchased at any shop, are thoroughly cleaned, are examined, and found to have no writing upon them; an individual proceeds with these slates to the house of a person said to be gifted with certain powers—a medium, so-called. This individual never loses sight of his bound or locked slates; he holds them in his own grasp, still bound or locked, the medium holding the slates also. After an interval of some minutes, the noise of writing is heard on the slates; this noise continues during a short time, and on the slates being unbound or unlocked, writing is found on the slates, this writing consisting in many instances of so many words that no human being could have written half the number of words in the same time. The handwriting and the signature to these words are often an exact representation of the handwriting and signature of a deceased friend of the inquirer, and the message itself often contains details of circumstances, unknown to any person present except the inquirer. In several instances the communications given were not at the time known even to the inquirer, who, after investigation, has proved that every detail of the written message was correct. Names long forgotten have been given, and such other details as to locality, &c., as to remind the inquirer of the accuracy of the facts that have been written.

Here is a rare phenomenon for investigation, and we will now refer to the manner in which this has been made. An individual desirous of examining this phenomenon procures the slates, and takes such precautions that they are capable of identification. He knows, therefore, that a prepared slate has not been palmed upon him. He watches the so-called medium in order, if possible, to detect some

proceeding which would indicate an attempt to deceive. He fails to discover any such attempt. Writing comes on the slate in the manner already described, and this writing is often not of a vague or indefinite kind, but not infrequently refers to some private or important matter connected with the inquirer. The handwriting of the message is also at times unmistakably that of the person whose signature is written under the message. This writing on the slate, when compared with the writing of the person when alive, and whose signature is attached to the message, is also found to be identical. These messages have been written in Russian, French, German, and other languages. Questions asked in Greek have been answered in Greek. A closed book has been taken at random; a page, a given line and word in this line, have been asked for, and the correct word has been written on the closed slates.

These facts have been witnessed and are testified to by hundreds of witnesses; these witnesses consisting of peers and peeresses, officers of every rank, men who have travelled in the East and are familiar with various forms of conjuring, professional conjurers, men of science, medical men, clergymen, authors, merchants:—all sorts and conditions of men testify to the facts.

We must now venture to call attention to what appears a most unnecessary proceeding on the part of these inquirers. If we proceed to the studio of a photographer, we do not, if sceptical of the power of photography, take our own marked plates in order to prevent imposition. We allow the photographer to supply his own materials and chemicals, and we judge by the results whether or not some conjuring performance has been carried on, and a sketch of ourselves, previously prepared, presented to us as a genuine sun-portrait. Why then should inquirers into slate-writing take all these precautions against trickery? If trickery is practised we can discover it by a far more simple process.

We will visit any professional conjurer, give him every opportunity of changing or manipulating his slates, and if he, without knowing our name, or without any previous knowledge of what our question will be, can within closed slates give an answer to our question or give to us a message in a handwriting exactly similar to that of the deceased friend with whom we wish to communicate, then this so-called conjurer has some power beyond that of mere conjuring. No such results have ever been obtained from a conjurer.

All such proceedings as the marking of slates, the perpetual observation, the never taking the eyes off the medium, are as puerile as would be similar proceedings with a photographer. The results obtained are the standard of judgment, and what are these? Mental questions receive clear and distinct written answers. Questions on subjects which cannot by any possibility be known to the medium receive definite and accurate answers, several witnesses testifying to this result having been obtained in their presence hundreds of times.

The precautions, therefore, with regard to marking, locking, or watching the slates appear a clumsy proceeding, when a much more severe and crucial test can be applied, viz., an analysis of the messages themselves. Although it is not probable, yet it may be possible, that a very experienced conjurer, when surrounded by very stupid people, all of whom are deficient in the powers of observation, may change one slate on which there is no writing for another slate on which writing has been prepared. We doubt whether this trick would succeed once in a dozen times with persons who had been accustomed to practise average card or other tricks. But let us admit that each one of the witnesses is so densely stupid and so unobservant that this deception has been practised, and we are as far off as ever from a solution of the facts. Suppose one slate can be changed for another, that the private marks for identification on one slate are by some wonderful and unknown power of conjuring imitated on another slate;

suppose also the so-called medium can write without moving his hand, and can write on the inside surface of closed slates, we are still without an explanation of the real facts, viz., that mental questions are answered; that the handwriting of a deceased friend appears on the slate; that the signature to this handwriting is the signature of the deceased friend; that facts which only this friend knew are referred to in the message; and then only are recalled to the mind of the inquirer. These are some few of the facts that require explanation.

#### CONVERSAZIONE OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

A Conversazione of the members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance was held on the evening of Friday, January 28th, in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall—Mr. W. Stainton Moses, M.A., President of the Alliance, in the chair—when an excellent paper was read by Mr. C. C. Massey on "The Application to Spiritualism of Scientific Research." This paper we give at length in another part of our present issue. Amongst those present during the evening were:—

The Misses Albert, Miss Ash, Mr. T. A. Amos and Mrs. and Miss Amos, Mrs. Brietzcke, Mr. and Miss F. Berkeley, Mr. and Miss Blyton, Mr. Bertram, Mr. C. E. Cassal, Mr. Everard Colt, the Misses Corner, Mrs. Cottell, Mr. A. Cole, Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Clappison, Mr. A. Cobbold, Mrs. A. Darling, Mr. H. Duncan, Mr. W. B. Dakin and Mrs. and Miss Dakin, Mr. T. H. Edmands and Mrs. Edmands, Mr. and Mrs. Elford, Mr. H. T. Eve, Colonel J. H. Earle, Mrs. Desmond Fitzgerald, Mrs. Filby, Miss Lottie Fowler, Mr. R. S. Fraser, Mr. W. B. Finch, Mr. A. Glendinning and the Misses Glendinning, Miss Godfrey, Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Miss Hedges, Mrs. Hudson, Miss Hallett, Miss Isham, Mrs. James, Mr. and Mrs. E. Sherrard Kennedy, Mrs. Limpus, Mrs. W. B. Lewis, Miss Long, Mr. T. G. Leeson, Mr. H. Leffler, Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Lovell, Mrs. and Miss de Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. Macrae, Mrs. and Miss Maltby, Mrs. Noakes, Mr. W. Stainton Moses, Mr. C. C. Massey, Dr. Mander, Mr. J. H. Mitchener and Mrs. Mitchener, Mr. A. L. Melhuish, Mr. Newton Melhuish, Miss McCallum, Mr. H. Cholmondeley Pennell, Mrs. Procter, Mr. W. Paice, Mr. C. C. Pearson, Mr. P. Preyss, Mr. H. Ridgway, Mr. G. Redway, Mr. E. Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Dawson Rogers and the Misses Rogers, Madame de Steiger, Miss Symonds, Mrs. Skeats, Miss Spencer, Mrs. Sturgeon, Mr. A. P. Sinnott, Mr. T. Shorter and Miss Shorter, Mr. J. H. Stack and Mrs. Stack, Mr. and Miss Sainsbury, Mr. Charlton T. Speer, Mr. A. T. Storey, Mr. and Mrs. Milner Stephen, Major J. le M. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Morell Theobald and Miss Theobald, Mr. and Mrs. W. Theobald and Miss Theobald, Miss F. J. Theobald, Miss Thorn, Miss M. E. Thorp, Mrs. Western, Mrs. and Miss Ward, Mrs. Alfred Wedgwood, Miss E. G. Wood, Miss E. Walker, Dr. George Wyld, Mr. A. A. Watts, Mr. A. E. Waite, Mr. H. Withall and the Misses Withall, &c., &c., &c.

The musical programme was exceedingly good. Songs and instrumental music were ably rendered by Miss Amos, Miss Alice Long, Mr. H. Leffler, Miss Ward, and the Misses Withall, all of whom generously gave their services and added greatly to the enjoyment of the evening. The grand piano used on the occasion was kindly lent by Messrs. John Brinsmead and Son.

The Annual Report, which was circulated before the meeting, showed a slow increase in the number of members during the year 1886. Three only had been removed by death. Mr. C. C. Massey and Mr. J. H. Mitchener had joined the Council; and Mr. Dawson Rogers, Dr. Stanhope Speer, and the Hon. Percy Wyndham had accepted the position of Vice-Presidents. A very gratifying feature in the year had been the growing use of the library, especially by country members. The interest in the periodical meetings held in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, had been increasingly maintained, valuable papers having been contributed by Mrs. De Morgan, Mr. A. A. Watts, and Mr. Eglinton. The Plan of Confederation

had at length assumed a final form, and had received adhesions from societies in various countries, among them France, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Russia, Algeria, the United States of America, Mexico, South America, and the West Indies. An apparently insuperable difficulty (at least, for the time) in the work of experimental research had sprung up in the shape of a dearth of mediums. The Council strongly recommended careful investigation in the Home Circle, until such time as they are able to secure the services of mediums sufficiently developed to obtain results in mixed circles. The Council further reported an important step which they had taken after mature consideration. Mr. Farmer's editorship and connection with "LIGHT" having ceased at the close of the year, it was decided to direct the paper under the editorship of a Committee of the Council, the Eclectic Publishing Company having acquiesced in that arrangement. Accordingly the present editors took control of the paper from the commencement of the current year.

It may be added to this abstract of the Council's Report that an arrangement has been made to meet the convenience of members who may wish to purchase Spiritualistic books or works in any branch of Occult literature. Mr. George Redway, York-street, Covent Garden, who makes a speciality of this branch, has undertaken to place a number of such books as experience shows to be most called for in the rooms of the London Spiritualist Alliance, so that members may obtain copies without trouble and delay. Any other works that may be inquired for will be obtained at once and forwarded post free to any given address. As the Psychological Press Association, which was Mr. Farmer's own business, and with which "LIGHT" had no connection, has ceased to exist, this arrangement will supply a want that has been repeatedly expressed. Members and their friends may be confident that any procurable book will be sent them without needless delay.

#### "LIGHT" AND THE LATE "PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESS."

It would seem from letters that reach us that it is necessary to correct a misapprehension. There has never been any connection whatever between "LIGHT" and the Psychological Press Association. The book-selling business was the private venture of Mr. Farmer, and ceased to exist at the close of the year when his connection with "LIGHT" terminated. We regret that there should be cause of complaint in regard to that business, but we are absolutely without power to remedy what we have no concern with. Our readers will note the arrangements we have made for their convenience in supplying books through Mr. George Redway. They may depend on punctuality and despatch now.

MR. EGLINTON is now in Pressburg, Hungary. His last séance in Munich was one of the best he has had for months, and we believe it is the intention of Baron du Prel, the celebrated German philosopher, who was present, to publish the results in one of the most influential papers in Germany. After leaving Hungary, Mr. Eglinton returns to Vienna, and thence goes to Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Moscow.

THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.—We understand that "the group of competent persons who are forming themselves into a committee for the purpose of examining any personal experiences [of a Spiritualistic character] that may be referred to them, and of giving any advice and assistance that they can in following up useful lines of experiment," is constituted. It consists, we believe, of the President (Professor Balfour Stewart, F.R.S.), the Hon. Secretary S.P.R. (Mr. Gurney), Professor Barrett, and Mr. Crookes, F.R.S. Mr. Angelo Lewis (Professor Hoffmann) is a professional expert whose business it will be to decide whether certain phenomena can be produced or imitated by conjuring. It seems to us that this committee is not likely to achieve any positive results. That an expert conjurer can imitate phenomena, that have spontaneously occurred in the presence of a child or an untrained person, does not advance knowledge, but only confuses and confounds.

## THE APPLICATION TO SPIRITUALISM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

*Paper read by MR. C. C. MASSEY before the members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance, at a Conversazione held in St. James's Hall, London, on Friday evening, January 28th, 1887.*

I fear that the title of this paper may be misleading. It may well suggest more practical considerations, and a more definite treatment of the subject, than I am able to offer. For although attention will be called to an apparent fallacy which seems to me to have vitiated some attempts at scientific verification of the phenomena of Spiritualism, the following remarks have in view rather the general relation of evidence to the great phenomenon of modern Spiritualism itself than any improvement of methods by which that evidence can be further substantiated and made to prevail. For I think we have long been under a delusion as to the use and function of external evidence of transcendental life. It will be understood that I am not therefore in the least questioning the validity of those evidences. I am as ready as ever to maintain that the testimony already accumulated is amply sufficient to satisfy a purely objective judgment, and that inability to recognise its probative force is due to that infusion of a subjective element which is never more apparent than when it is imputed, without a shadow of foundation, to the evidence itself.

But it is to little purpose to urge this in a world so imperfectly self-conscious as our own, in which conviction of prejudice is a far rarer phenomenon than conviction of sin. We have to deal with conditions of belief which are not purely logical and objective, and I shall have especially to urge that the modification of those conditions is itself one of the unseen processes of Spiritualism, and is not to be looked for from any mere pressure of external proofs. It has been the boast of more than a generation of Spiritualists that the proof of individual survival has become independent of faith, of intuition, of religion, of philosophy, and has descended to the level on which it can be recognised by the man of physical science and by the common jury of mankind. It was alleged with equal confidence that the facts could be verified by anyone, and that the Spiritualistic inference from the facts was the only possible one. Both these assertions have been to some extent modified, though the failure of investigators is still generally imputed to some defect in themselves, and alternative explanations of the facts, when admitted, are usually held to originate in prejudice or imperfect experience. Still, the number of people who have assured themselves, or have had any opportunity of assuring themselves, personally of the facts, is relatively small, while the number of opinions has been steadily on the increase. But it has been thought that the quantity of good evidence already accumulated and daily increasing would gradually obtain recognition in the world, and would presently suffice for the foundation of a rational belief in human immortality, or at any rate in the existence of faculties and of depths of conscious being not easily referable to the physical basis of our life. But experience teaches us two or three facts which seem to me much at variance with this expectation. One, and it is that on which I shall chiefly insist, is the mere want of interest of the large majority of mankind, not excluding educated people, in evidence of this character, and even in the questions to which it relates. Another is the circumstance that even when this interest is present, people are not found to be content with testimony, however powerful and abundant, but immediately and persistently demand a personal experience of the facts. Natural curiosity only partially accounts for this requirement; far more does it originate in the general atmosphere of incredulity, which infects individuals contrary to their reason; and it is also to some extent due to another effect of the same general cause, viz., false standards of probability originating in subjective presumptions, and perverting the estimation of evidence. If the world could be induced to proceed logically in its search for truth, this circumstance, or rather the question thus raised, would alone suffice to postpone the consideration of evidence till in a purely intellectual discussion we had settled the principles upon which evidence of extraordinary facts should be weighed. But public opinion has never been patient of such educational processes, that is to say, it never entertains the previous question of its own intellectual competence for immediate judgment. It is true of the world as of individuals, that self-criticism is a late attainment of culture, and I suspect it is much later as an incident of intellectual progress than as an incident of ethical progress.

Closely connected with the subject of adverse presumptions, but belonging less to the general prejudice than to misapplications of ordinarily legitimate presumptions, are certain sources of fallacy quite peculiar to this investigation, whether as regards the acquisition of experience by original research, with mediums, or as regards the evidential estimation of such experience as testimony. Most investigators work without any hypothesis; they have no conceptions adapted to these phenomena. But what is worse, they have no notion that any hypothesis is at all wanted; they even pride themselves upon being simply "observers," as if simple observation of new phenomena with nothing but old ideas in the head could protect us from constant misapprehension of what we are observing! A very little thought and study in the subject before we set about "investigating" would warn us of the mistakes we may make in applying presumptions which are indisputably valid for ordinary experience to experience in this new field. Most beginners, while recognising the necessity for a "medium," ignore everything that necessity may, and probably must, imply except mere physical presence. I think Spiritualists themselves are partly to blame for this, because in their anxiety to appropriate the manifestations as far as possible to the "spirits," they have unduly subordinated the embodied psychic, and diverted attention from the functions the latter must perform, if the fact that he or she is indispensable is to mean anything for us at all. But for the investigator this function is really, in the first instance, the most important part of the whole question. A knowledge of it, or of alternative theories of it, is essential to a prudent judgment, or suspense of judgment, of many appearances which for uninstructed "common-sense" could have but one interpretation.

But it is still more for the elicitation of the phenomena than for the judgment of them that a preliminary study of the human instrument of research is required. To very few investigators does it occur that their own co-operation may be necessary, or in what sense it may be necessary. This is mainly due to the fact that the existence of a class of public or professional mediums has obscured the normal conditions of this research, so that the medium has come to be regarded as altogether exceptionally qualified, rather than as one who possesses in excess a force (or mediating element) which is common to all. He is thus to some, but to a very limited extent, able to dispense with the solidarity of a harmonious circle, but only if and when his own nervous condition is favourable, and no opposing influence obstructs. But he still probably owes his greatest successes to the accidental and unrecognised presence of the advantages he would enjoy in a proper circle. With some investigators he has been in the frequent habit of sitting with mutual confidence, others are themselves "mediumistic," with others he finds himself in a sort of natural *rapport*; so that in many cases he has either direct assistance, or experiences a genial influence which exalts his nervous condition to the most favourable pitch. But as all the results go down to his individual credit, the general public being quite ignorant of these peculiar circumstances, an indiscriminate expectation is raised, followed often by total disappointment, or by partial or unsatisfactory manifestations. Against the many and, I think, indispensable advantages of public mediumship, we have thus to set off the grave mischief that it has diverted attention from the importance of psychical conditions, of the temperamental influence of investigators—an influence they are themselves usually quite unable to recognise or trace. Suspicious, or even coldly critical observers, though they may be perfectly fair-minded and well-disposed, are particularly likely to introduce conditions unfavourable to the elicitation of the phenomena they would witness. As the best success is to be expected when the medium is in good spirits, hopeful, and cheerful, so may failure be anticipated from any depressing influence, from over-anxiety, or some sense of an uneasy relation to those present. But investigators cannot make mental and temperamental dispositions to order; confidence and cordiality are natural only to the intimacy of a private circle, whose *rapport* and solidarity they secure. But when we know that they have been brought to a professional medium, they are regarded as derogating from the evidential value of the results they have helped to obtain.

Partly, then, to the ignorance or neglect of psychical conditions, partly to the impossibility of commanding them, I attribute the notorious failure of "Committees" and of single investigators of the scientific order who have entered on the research with an accentuated distrust of their successful prede-

cessors, and with minds merely "open to conviction." Even if it were thought that further discussion would impress upon adventurers in this research the necessity of recognising and studying psychical conditions, it is evident that unless those conditions could also thus be secured, the knowledge of them would be of little avail. But in truth there has never seemed to be the slightest disposition to learn from the experience of Spiritualists. There is a single fixed and dominant idea that scientific research in this province means the elimination of fraud and nothing more. The first duty of the scientific inquirer, to seek the proper conditions for the *elicitation* of the phenomena to be witnessed, has been entirely lost sight of. Thought has been bestowed only upon conditions of *control*. Or even where there has been a willingness to let things take their own course at first, this has still been without any recognition of the positive and *normal* conditions of elicitation, with some of which, as we have seen, the professional medium cannot really dispense, though he may seem to do so.

But supposing that all this came to be acknowledged, what, we must ask ourselves, would be the gain, beyond the removal of a misunderstanding? Would it not be at once apparent that not only do developed mediums form a distinct class of mankind, but that, as a broad general rule, the same is true of the investigators who can verify these phenomena? To be sure, the alternative qualifications of this second class are various enough to enable it to include persons of very different characters and attainments. The man of science, the professional man, the conjurer, every avocation whatever, will certainly be represented in it. Sporadic testimony will thus go on constantly accumulating, and it was in this, rather than in organised scientific research, that the best hope of ultimate general recognition of these facts seemed to consist. But now, again, how stands the case with that hope? As already pointed out, it depends (1) on interest in the subject; (2) on a readiness to be convinced without personal experience; (3) on the reformation of false subjective standards of probability, which make a fair estimate of testimony impossible, and give birth to the most extravagant presumptions against it. Now it is not too much to say that when these logical conditions of conviction are obtained, the world will hardly need convincing, and also that the direct verification which they will facilitate will make reliance on the indirect proof by testimony almost unnecessary.

The foregoing considerations do not encourage the hope that the renewal of faith in the spiritual nature of man, or in the existence of extra-mundane consciousness, will result from any mere demonstration through the science of observation, or from any accumulation of external evidence. No fact is really believed or entertained unless there is a form of intelligence suitable for its reception (however erroneous that form may be, and usually is). Modern science, with its multifarious information, only became possible by, and consequent upon, a change in the fundamental conceptions of the educated classes—their *Weltanschauung*, as the Germans call it—of which two great intellectual movements, the Renaissance and the Reformation, were the earlier symptoms. We are extremely liable to be misled as to the true relation of cause and effect, or antecedent and consequent, in the phenomena of human progress, by the furthering and stimulating action of effects—their reaction—which makes them look so very like originating causes. Thus it is common to hear of the influence of science in disintegrating the old system of religious belief. But that system, though its fabric seemed unimpaired, had already been undermined by the as yet unrecognised tendency of the rising spirit of free-thought. The same process of inward development which gave a Luther to the world made the contemporary Copernicus possible. If we are Spiritualists in any philosophical sense, we shall always seek the causes of material and historical phenomena in the spiritual, not degrading spiritual and intellectual progress by attributing it ultimately to anything whatever that is outward and phenomenal. Rather shall we refuse to see in the latter any original basis of belief, recognising only its conformity to principles of intelligence. He would of course be a foolish, or rather crazy, idealist who should deny the value of observation, of experiment, of research, in contact with our external world. But we shall maintain the order of knowledge to be hypothesis first, and then verification, nor shall we expect to find the unity of reason in the empirical manifold unless it is first conscious in ourselves, though the consciousness may be indeterminate and wavering, needing fixation, elucidation, and definition in the object. We are false to the principle of Spiritualism if we expect the latter to prevail by any action of its objective

evidences upon the unprepared intelligence of mankind. So far from importuning an incredulous world with our facts, we should rather avoid leaning too heavily on them ourselves. Not that our interest in them need diminish, but because we should understand the present phase to be transitory, to be introductory to something better and more effective.

Anticipations of the development of phenomenal Spiritualism have sometimes taken the form of predictions of unparalleled marvels by which the world should be compulsorily convinced. I think I remember reading long ago a trance address in which we were told that in a year or two materialised forms of well-known deceased citizens would be walking down Regent-street or Broadway. That sort of thing well represents the misconception that facts are bludgeons by which truth can be dashed into the human brain. If one fact is not stout enough for this purpose, we try, or imagine, another. But if we turn from this impotent *bêtise*, and even dismiss, as contrary to the true order of intellectual progress, our more specious mistakes as to the function of evidence in that order, we may perhaps recognise a likelier and fairer prospect, and one more conformable to the principles of the philosophy we would advance. We shall see that the Socratic doctrine of the acquisition of wisdom and knowledge through the words of a master is true also of the teachings of nature through every agency, conscious or unconscious, and that the virtue of her speech, as of that of the philosopher, lies in an obstetric office. It is only the pregnant understanding that is delivered by the senses. What student does not remember to have cast aside a book in weariness and unintelligence, which, taken up again, it may be casually, in a later year, has fired a later imagination, and illuminated the obscure places of a later thought? Even so it is with these phenomena. They are not received because they are not understood. The function of evidence is not to create understanding, but to verify it, and no experience is possible which is not thought as well as sensed. Let us seek, then, first the form of intelligence, and its matter shall be added to us. But by this form of intelligence is not meant any cut and dried concepts of the mind. Rather is it a presentiment of what is relatively to us spiritual, of the interior life from which these manifestations flow, a kind of rudiment, perhaps, of the inner sense which would be the organ of a more direct and immediate experience.

Now this sort of organic preparation it is that has made the actual extension of Spiritualism possible; in other words, we have been able to recognise in external facts the verification of an internal sense. This internal sense is with some only an intellectual form of consciousness, by which the facts are easily *thought*, while with others it is more recognisable in its character as sense and intuition. It is therefore probable, if the modern manifestations signify an advancing wave of spirit influence, or if we have entered on another cycle of such influence, that this influence is working inwardly as well as outwardly, and is organising mankind sub-consciously, or is by its pressure, awakening latent and sub-surface sensibilities. If this were so, we should find the hope of widespread recognition of the spiritual rather in the unseen development of this process than in misapplications of scientific methods of research, or in the functions of uninformed judgment in relation to external evidences. That these phenomena are playing a great part in the epidemic development of latent faculties is scarcely doubtful. We know with what startling rapidity hitherto latent "mediumship" is sometimes elicited by very short expediency with a well-developed psychic.

Now the conditions of modern life are beyond all precedent favourable to this elicitation of hidden and unsuspected faculties, however little favourable to those higher forms of experimentation which I shall have to touch upon before concluding. The social intercourse which brings the subject so frequently into discussion, and excites eager curiosity in every quarter where predisposition exists; the newspaper Press, which by an amusing fatality is unable to let the subject alone, and by its very hostility and jeers is constantly awakening attention to it, and giving occasion for the communication of experiences at every dinner table and in every drawing-room; the novelists, who are emulously working the rich vein of psychical and ghostly and magical fiction, as well representing as stimulating public interest; the facility and habit of travelling, increasing the chance of contact with the mystical side of life; popular education, which enlarges the area of information and resulting interest, in this as in every other subject; the growth of free-thought and decay of the repressive influence of authority; all these circumstances are eminently conducive to the acquisition and distribution of

personal experience. According to Von Hartmann: "In England 3 per cent., in America, where the air is drier, as many as 5 per cent. of people are mediums to an extent worth cultivation."\* The authority for this computation is not given, but it is probably near the truth. Now if we consider that personal experimentation will certainly increase with the widening area of information, it is apparent that the number of households in which latent aptitudes will be excited to activity must soon be very large. I am quite aware, and I quite feel, that in this prospect there is cause for very grave apprehensions. Spiritualism is a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and there are many for whom the state of innocence is represented by materialism, individualism, and a religious formalism from which all the spirit is departed, who will be prompt to misapply the prohibition, and to quote the penalty. But much of the danger of "mediumship"—spirit obsession and control—is probably a passing phase arising from the isolation of mediums, and will find its correction in the advancing discovery of the potent forces which can be educated by psychical association and unity. We are still in the infancy of this experience because we have thought too exclusively of the individual "medium," and far too little of the circle. True, there has been insistence upon "harmony," but the great scientific significance of this condition has not been apprehended with any clear intelligence, nor have the dynamics of thought and desire, the fact that we may lay down or cross the lines of subtle agency by the rhythmic or discordant vibrations set up by mental action, been fully recognised. There is, for instance, no occasion to suppose the presence of any specially developed medium in that impressive and pathetic scene when the monks of the Charter House were awaiting their persecution with fortitude and devotion. "The third day was the mass of the Holy Ghost, and God made known His presence among us. For when the host was lifted up there came, as it were, a whisper of air, which breathed upon our faces as we knelt. Some perceived it with the bodily senses, all felt it as it thrilled into their hearts. And then followed a sweet, soft sound of music, at which our venerable father was so moved, God being thus abundantly manifest among us, that he sank down in tears, and for a long time could not continue the service—we all remaining stupefied, hearing the melody, and feeling the marvellous effect of it upon our spirits, but knowing neither whence it came nor whither it went."†

Now, though Spiritualists can distinguish this incident from hallucination, if only by reason of that manifestation so familiar to us all—the breath of air—it is not a case which we should think of adducing as "evidence" for the public, on account of the very circumstance which gives it importance for my present purpose. The witnesses were in a state of exaltation. I am quite sure that Mrs. Sidgwick would not consider the conditions of that séance to have been favourable to "continuous observation." I am afraid Mr. R. Hodgson would infer from the statement that all felt the air as it thrilled into their hearts, whereas only some are alleged to have perceived it with their bodily senses, that the whole story is too evidently reducible to a figure of speech. And I am left with only the faintest hope that Professor Sidgwick might relent, in consideration that the pecuniary inducement to fraud is not apparent, though I dare not assume that he would not suspect the Prior. While as to my friend Mr. Myers, it is to be feared the sweet music might too painfully remind him of Madame Blavatsky and the Astral Bell.

But we see at once how the first objection, which in one form or another would be taken by most people, strikes at the condition of the manifestation, the tense harmony of the circle, the rhythmic energy of a great emotion and a common faith. Such exceptional occasions, and the resulting psychical conditions in such felicity, are of course rare. But the very fact that such conditions are ideally the best, and that the nearer any circle approaches to them in unity and energy of feeling, the more powerful is its invocation, should show the mere scientific observer, who will not or cannot, so to speak, "throw himself into the spirit of the thing," how little likely his patience is to be rewarded. But never mind that now. The point here is that the future of Spiritualism, delivery from its dangers, redemption from its frivolities and its egotisms, and the hope of its conversion into a great instrument of human happiness and progress, depend on the aim and

organisation of its circles. They may become the centres and strongholds of an experience that shall have a sensible influence on the world. The use of Spiritualism has been too exclusively regarded as consisting in the assurance it affords of individual conscious survival of physical dissolution, and in whatever ethical consequences may be expected from a mere knowledge of that fact. It is this which has brought the evidential question so much to the front, because if the one use of Spiritualism is to recreate belief in immortality, it must succeed as a propaganda, or not at all. But if, as I suggest, the primary fact of modern Spiritualism is not the manifestations, but our own power of mediating them, it seems to me that our relation to the subject undergoes a most important and significant change. For thus we are no longer passive recipients of information about another world, and of domestic consolations as to which comparatively few of us are quite free from doubt, but we are at once face to face with ethical responsibilities, and with potentialities, not only of self-development, but of the most beneficent action in the world. We come to understand what powerful forces the great law of sympathy places at our disposal, if only we will raise ourselves to the condition of *rappor*t. And as soon as we associate Spiritualism with this idea, there is an immediate transition from our former view of it as evidential to one which will certainly limit the number of its adherents, but which, if faithfully carried out, will raise it to a tower of influence and strength. Scientific Spiritualism is necessarily practical, because the true object of experimentation is ourselves. The first condition of "mediumship" is passivity. But in the higher development which is here anticipated that condition rises to the more or less complete passivity of egoism, of the individualism which separates, and is the loss of larger consciousness. So that the due preparation of "circles" will transform them, in the first instance, into schools, and he only will be allowed to enter who consents to the cathartic discipline which opens the gate of the interior life. *Hic labor, hoc opus est.* I believe that the organisation of Spiritualism upon earth, if we have regard to its ideal tendency, is a great fact of the future, but it will not exist for the purpose of convincing the incredulous, but for the training of mankind.

### THE BROTHERS.

A Saviour spirit dwells in every soul,  
Which from the beginning of man's life is slain,  
Not only once, but ever and again;  
Whereby is made redemption for the whole,  
From every ill whereto that life is heir,  
Or hath engendered to itself of pain,  
Anguish incessant, grief, remorse, and pride.  
So is there, too, a spirit, the Betrayer,  
In every soul,—whereby is torn and tried  
The life Divine,—which, ever and again,  
Selleth its highest good unto the slayer—  
The Judas spirit, with the brand of Cain.  
Thus dwelleth ever in us—side by side—  
The Crucifier ;—and the Crucified.

A. A. W.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALIST INSTITUTE, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM, SUNDAY, JANUARY 30TH.—Mr. J. A. Butcher gave an able inspirational discourse on "Spiritualism: Its Use," which was listened to with marked attention by a numerous audience. On Sunday we also inaugurated a children's Lyceum, which in future will be held on Sunday afternoons at 2.30 p.m.—W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec., 9, Pasley-road, Walworth.

THE LONDON OCCULT LODGE AND ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL INQUIRY, REGENT HOTEL, 31, MARYLEBONE-ROAD.—Last Sunday morning we had a very interesting meeting for Mesmeric Healing with Mr. Price. These fortnightly meetings are growing in interest. Next Sunday morning there will be no meeting. In the evening, at seven, Mr. Price will deliver a lecture on "Mesmerism," followed by demonstrations, especially for healing purposes.—F. W. READ, Secretary, 79, Upper Gloucester-place, N.W.

We are indebted to our friend the editor of the *Religious Philosophical Journal* for a very cordial and too flattering notice of "LIGHT" under its new management. It will be our endeavour to deserve some of the good words that are prospectively accorded us. We especially desire to make "LIGHT" acceptable to our American readers as the organ of English Spiritualism of that cultivated class which readers of the *Journal* appreciate. We shall welcome expression of opinion from the States, and shall try to keep our English readers posted in American news so far as our limited space permits.

\* *Spiritism*, p. 6 of translation.

† Quoted by Froude. *History of England*. Vol. II., p. 244. Ed. 1870.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is better that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

Mr. Eglinton's Psychography.  
To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Absence in America has prevented me from seeing, until recently, the special issue of "LIGHT," containing the testimonies to the genuineness of Mr. Eglinton's psychography in confutation of the theories advanced by Mrs. Sidgwick. I ask permission, therefore, at this late period, to correct a typographical error in the testimony contributed by myself.

I am made to say that when the writing was finished the upper slate was *in the drawer*. What I really wrote was, that the upper slate was *withdrawn*. The blunder is an especially unfortunate and awkward one, as it might seem to lend colour to the suggestion thrown out by some of Mr. Eglinton's assailants, that the table used by him is: his séances is provided with a secret drawer, of which he avails himself for purposes of concealment, though this I can emphatically state I have proved by experience and observation not to be the case. It is most desirable that this inaccuracy should be corrected without delay, as otherwise it might sometime be cited as an authentic record, to the damage of that unimpeachable medium, Mr. Eglinton.—Yours truly,

J. G. SPEED.

Paston Carew—Millionaire and Miser.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—If I may be permitted a few remarks upon *Paston Carew, Millionaire and Miser*,—to which reference was made in a recent number of "LIGHT," I would say that the Spiritualism therein contemptuously set forth is not of a kind to which we, as honourable members of society, could give approval. A mother and daughter, representing low types of fashionable husband-hunters, are dragged into the plot for the sole purpose, one would think, of giving a side-blow to what the authoress would doubtless term a craze of the day, which has not interested her beyond the inspection of contemptuous curiosity. Not a note of sympathy, nor of real appreciative comprehension of the subject, has been struck from first to last. All that is sought, or intended, is to represent Spiritualism as she conceives it to be—a foolish and degrading pursuit. And, indeed, as represented, nothing can be more so. The younger of the vulgar pair of adventuresses, who pass their lives in a perpetual scramble of small, mean ruses and stratagems to push themselves higher, and keep in the sunshine of seeming ease and prosperity, puts herself forward to *Paston Carew* as a "medium"; and possessing herself of some of his secrets, adroitly manages to weave them into communications which she pretends, perhaps half believes, to come from his departed relatives, one of whom is still living, but not known to be so, under the very nose of the man for whom a wily trap is laid with the intention of some day inveigling him into a marriage.

It was, doubtless, the desire of the accomplished authoress to represent "Society" as it stands; and as, nowadays, nearly everybody tampers with the occult, like children touching an electric battery with a long pole, to see, perchance, if it will kick back, so the sportive idiots of the female, or even opposite sex,—which is supposed to be more serious about everything, if not wiser—who seek to suspend another attraction with those they may imagine they already dangle before the eyes of observers, and who have picked up Spiritualism, or pseudo-mediumship, as suited to their purpose—could not well be passed over by one who seeks to depict the vagaries of the world as they are. But it unfortunately forms the one weak feature of her plot, and is so lamely carried out that one can only think it a blemish upon an otherwise well-constructed and ably-developed story. *Paston Carew's* dabbling in spirit-intercourse, and a kind of puerile superstition savouring of black magic picked up in India, is maudlin, childish, and perfectly inconsistent with the bitter, stern strength of a character which, for a life-time, has been unrelentingly building up a scheme of revenge. It resembles the one small leak-hole in an otherwise taut vessel, well equipped to encounter the storms and tempests of a long and perilous voyage.

Such pictures of Spiritualism are "more honoured in the breach than the observance"; and such a practice of mediumship as the authoress depicts is a degrading folly. Such

tampering with a grave and grand subject of human study and research is *not progress*; but rather more resembles the shambling, sideways, and uncertain advances towards an unknown goal, made by the flat and stupid crab. Nor can Spiritualists, as lovers of their human brethren, congratulate themselves upon any such portents of the spread of that they hold dear; but rather say "hands off" to such profane dabblers in their noble science.

It is almost impossible nowadays to pick up a novel, magazine, or paper in which one may not find numerous allusions of some kind or other, wise and appreciative, or the contrary, to the occult, the spiritual, the unknown, the vaguely surmised—that which has to do with the soul-region of life, the astral plane; the, in short, *supernatural*, as it is termed. But it has come to be part of the accepted stock-in-trade of the professional novel or magazine writers, and whether it has been studied skimming or deeply, whether it is understood and accepted as truth or not, is not always, and is not intended to be, apparent. It pays to-day, it attracts its crowds of readers, and that is enough for *les mondains*. Others may try to teach and to lead the minds of their readers upwards, but the crowd of worldly mummers will only seek to gain money by amusing the public. They play with the long flickering shadows of a great light. One day they may behold its glorious effulgence. Meantime the great body of humanity grows and evolves its grand destiny, and these outside parasitic stragglers will also be swept up in their turn in the inexorable whirlings of the great wheel, and be turned out anew.

NIZIDA.

[It seems to us that such a character as *Paston Carew's*—stern, relentless, self-reliant, cruel—is precisely the one in which superstition would develop, and in which it would necessarily take a debased form. The writer of *Paston Carew* knows more than our correspondent thinks of the Occult, and her insight here has been, in our opinion, true.—EDS. "LIGHT."]

"Liberated Spirits."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In common, I suspect, with many of your readers, I shall be glad to know what Mr. Haughton, in his last letter, means by a "liberated spirit." I have been accustomed to regard the true bondage of the spirit as consisting in the tendencies which incline it to materiality, and cause it to fix its affections on things below and without, instead of on things above and within. And I have accordingly come to consider that spirit only as really "liberated" which has overcome these earthward tendencies, and so steadfastly fixed its affections on things Divine that materiality has no longer any attraction for it. And I have further learnt to believe that until this state is attained we neither can, nor would if we could, dispense altogether with material conditions. Mr. Haughton, on the contrary, seems to ignore altogether the dispositions of the spirit concerned, and to make, not its own affections and tendencies, but the mere fact of its investment with a material body, the condition of bondage, and to regard liberation as consisting in the simple divestment of such body, no matter how strongly set towards materiality, and how reluctant to part with the body and its propensities the spirit may be.

I dislike applying such a term as "absurd" to any honest opinion; but if such is indeed Mr. Haughton's conception as to what constitutes freedom and bondage for the spirit, there is no choice but to borrow the word from him and apply it, not to the view he stigmatises as "absurd," but to his own. For according to him it is "absurd" to suppose that the "liberated" school-boy, after long holiday in the paternal home, ever returns to the bondage of his school; or that the criminal who has once got free of such a "bar and hindrance" to burglarious endeavours as a prison, is ever again immured. Nevertheless, it is a matter of familiar experience that boys do return to school after their liberation for the holidays; and that, if sensible lads, they do so willingly, knowing it is for their advantage, disagreeable though it may be to them. And, as the police reports abundantly show, criminals who have served one term in prison not unfrequently find themselves re-consigned to "durance vile," and this again and again, even without their own consent. And, to take yet another instance of "absurdity," as understood by Mr. Haughton, people who have once "cast off the mortal coil" of that cumbrous and costly appendage, their clothing, by reason of its being worn out or otherwise become unwearable, are universally in the habit of inducing themselves with yet another and another suit so long as their bodies need such protection or concealment, instead of taking

advantage of their "liberation" to dispense with such a "bar and hindrance" to activity and economy.

But Mr. Haughton can cite on his side "Swedenborg, the omniscient." Well, that may show only that of the doctrine of Correspondence—his recovery of which is Swedenborg's chiefest merit—there are some applications which eluded his omniscience; but which—had he consulted his own intuitions more and the "angels," as he called the spirits, less—he might have recovered also.

January 31st.

E. M.

The Medical Faculty of Paris and that of Nancy on the Important Question of Hypnotism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you kindly give publicity to the following letter which I have addressed to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*?—Yours obediently,

F. OMERIN.

To the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*.

SIR,—One of your evening contemporaries of the 11th ult., in a leading paragraph, referred to the experiments made by Dr. Charcot, of the Medical Faculty of Paris, in the Salpêtrière Hospital, on patients subjected to hypnotic treatment, or artificially induced sleep. The principal part of this paragraph runs thus:—

"Most interesting experiments are being made by Dr. Charcot, of the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, with hysterical and hypnotic patients. The possibility of transferring paralysis, nervous contractions, and cataleptic symptoms from one person to another having been proved to the doctor's entire satisfaction, he has been engaged lately, in conjunction with other medical men, in applying the test to hysterical dumbness. It may not be generally known that people suffering from hysterical epilepsy frequently become suddenly tongue-tied, remaining for years in this condition. In connection with this affection Dr. Charcot lately made the following experiment:—A woman, tongue-tied—but otherwise in robust health—was placed back to back with a patient who had for a long time been cataleptic. By means of a magnet the dumbness was transferred from one patient to the other with as much regularity as had characterised the experiments on paralysis. Dr. Charcot is persuaded that, persevering in these curious experiments, he will succeed in restoring the faculty of speech to this tongue-tied patient, as well as to others who have been operated upon in a similar manner."

About a month before, that is to say, on the 12th November last, the *Daily Telegraph* mentioned some such experiments, followed by similar results, made in the same hospital by the surgeon, M. Babinski.

I fully recognise the capability and learning of Dr. Charcot and of other members of the Faculty of Paris, and am aware of the high reputation they enjoy; yet after reading the articles above mentioned, I incline to the opinion, based upon an attentive study of the course which advancing knowledge on this subject has followed, that they have allowed preconceived ideas to occupy in their minds the place of ascertained facts. This may, perhaps, be accounted for by a very natural and laudable desire to gain for their Faculty that pre-eminent position in this important study which, thanks to the many years of intelligent and patient research devoted to it, had already been attained by the Faculty of Nancy.

That in forming the opinion indicated, I have not allowed myself to be misled what follows will, I think, go to show. M. Paul Janet, a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, acting as though he were instructed by the Medical Faculty of Paris, made an attack, as severe as unfounded, upon that of Nancy, attributing faults in their method of carrying out the hypnotic experiments, and in their views upon these operations. On behalf of the Faculty of Nancy, Dr. Bernheim, one of the professors, a man of high intellectual attainments, replied, conducting the defence with masterly ability, and carrying it to a successful conclusion.

Not desiring to identify myself with, or take any part in this question (being in no way personally interested, but wishing only that the truth may be elicited), I shall confine myself to reproducing that part of Dr. Bernheim's reply more particularly relating to the proceeding of the Salpêtrière to which the London Press has made reference.

In one paragraph, the learned Dr. Bernheim says:—

"Neither have I been able in any case to transfer without sug-

gestion, from one side of a body to the other, a contraction, paralysis, hysteria, or sensorial illusion by the mere application of a magnet, as those of the Salpêtrière pretend to have done."

Speaking of other processes, which Dr. Charcot and others of his Faculty employ for producing certain effects in hypnotics, he says, in another paragraph:—"In order to put a limb in a state of catalepsy it is not necessary to open the eyes of the hypnotics, as they do in the Salpêtrière: it suffices to lift the limb, hold it raised, and in case of necessity, declare that the hypnotic cannot lower it, and the limb remains in subjective catalepsy."

In another paragraph he expresses himself thus:—"If I have not accepted the three phases of hysterical hypnotism just as Charcot has described them, that is, *lethargy*, *catalepsy* and *somnambulism*, it is because I have been unable to confirm by personal observation the existence of these diverse conditions as distinct phases." The doctor refers, subsequently, in support of what he has advanced in connection with this matter, to the kindred observations made by other members of the Faculty of Nancy.

A few paragraphs further on he says:—"To confirm the characters of the somnambulistic state, when the person is apt to manifest them, it is not necessary to apply friction to the crown, as they do in the Salpêtrière. It is sufficient to speak to the sleeper, and if he is susceptible of suggestion, he does what he is told, or effects the phenomenon suggested to him." Further on he writes as follows:—"Scarcely one in six of the hypnotics comes up to what is called a profound somnambulism, and when he does not at once yield to the hypnotic influence, none of the operations which we have tried has been found to produce it. The degree of hypnotic susceptibility appears to us to depend solely on the individual temperament and in no wise on the manipulation employed."

And in another paragraph:—"I add that the psychical phenomena that we, M. Richet and others, have mentioned, have been confirmed by all the observers, and nobody doubts about them; whilst we have been unable to verify the pretended physical phenomena."

To judge of the value which should be attributed to Dr. Bernheim's assertions and to those of the Faculty of Nancy, it will be convenient to consider, besides the eminent qualities which distinguish several of its members, that in Nancy they have devoted themselves for twenty-six or twenty-seven years to the investigation of the discovery of Braid, and that during this time they have made some 7,000 hypnotic experiments, and have arrived at the most interesting conclusions, whilst only about eight years have elapsed since Dr. Charcot commenced his labours in this branch of knowledge.

On an examination of the proceedings of the two Faculties, it would appear that that of Paris is more inclined than that of Nancy to formulate theories without sufficient foundation, and to commit themselves to something like theatrical performances. This last was scarcely to be expected from those who were so severe with Mesmer for certain modes of proceeding that he, erroneously, believed indispensable at a time when the knowledge on this subject was in its infancy.

That as regards formulating theories, much care should ever be taken, experience clearly demonstrates, and this is confirmed by the recent death of Mullett, in Bolton, from hydrophobia, although the dog which bit him was perfectly healthy, and another similar case which occurred a short time previously at Putney, both cases proving how unfounded is the doctrine of M. Pasteur—that if a dog which has bitten someone be confined for ten days, there is no risk to the person bitten should the dog in this time manifest no symptoms of hydrophobia.

As the investigation concerning the phenomena produced by hypnotism is of the utmost importance, and has excited a great interest in many persons of culture, and given rise to several Press notices, it has appeared to me desirable to give to the public the foregoing slight indications. I regret that my engagements have prevented my doing so earlier, but now beg you will kindly insert them in the columns of your valuable paper, and excuse me for thus troubling you.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

3, Bulstrode-street, Welbeck-street,  
Cavendish-square, W.

February 1st, 1887.

F. OMERIN.

JOHN PAGE HOPES' new work, *Spiritualism in the Old Testament*, may be had through any bookseller, on giving the name of the London publisher, E. W. Allen, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London. Price threepence. Post free from the author, Leicester.